

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Claims

1. A method by which a company provides interactive, Internet-based, ongoing coaching to a plurality of clients, said method comprising:

a) providing multiple coaches;

5 b) at some stage in said method prior to step f), assigning a personal online coach from multiple coaches to each said client;

c) receiving from the client information particular to an ongoing concern of the client;

10 d) based on the information provided in step c), devising a set of recommendations for the client pertinent to the client's ongoing concern;

e) transmitting the recommendations of step d) to the client;

15 f) having transmitted to the client's coach, via the Internet, particularized information from the client pertaining to the ongoing concern of the client, wherein the information includes reportage of events occurring in the life of the client subsequent to the transmittal of the recommendations of step e);

20 g) based on the information received by the client in step f), having the coach devise further recommendations for the client pertinent to the ongoing concern of the client;

h) transmitting the recommendations of step g) to the client via the Internet;

and

i) repeating steps f-h) multiple times.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein, in steps f-h), the client and the coach communicate over the Internet at scheduled times, with real-time dialogue in the form of "chat" format typed comments and questions.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein, in steps f-h), the client and the coach communicate over the Internet at scheduled times, with real-time dialogue in the form of Internet-based telephone conversation.

5 4. The method of claim 1, wherein, in steps f-h), the client and the coach communicate over the Internet at scheduled times, with real-time dialogue in the form of Internet-based video/audio conversation.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein there is provided for the coaches a web-based chat room to which said clients and the general public are denied access.

10 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the coaching process includes providing to the clients incentives for reaching goals pertaining to the ongoing concern of the clients.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the incentives include rewards provided to the clients for reaching said goals.

8. The method of claim 6, wherein the incentives include the awarding of points that are redeemable for rewards.

15 9. The method of claim 1, wherein there is provided for the clients a web-based chat room.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said clients' chat room is not accessible by the coaches and the general public.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein said method further comprises providing a publicly-accessible Web site that provides information about said coaching method.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said Web site includes advertising of products or services not sold by the company, wherein entities other than the company pay the company to post said advertising on the Web site.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein products or services are offered for sale on said Web site.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein clients are offered incentives to communicate, via the Internet, with prospective clients of the company about their experience with the coaching program.

15. The method of claim 5, wherein there are periodic visits to the coaches' Web site by non-coach individuals with expertise in the subject of the clients' ongoing concern.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein there are periodic visits to the clients' Web site by non-coach individuals with expertise in the subject of the clients' ongoing concern.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client is health-related.

18. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the individual pertains to personal relationships.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to stress.

20. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to anxiety.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to depression.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to pregnancy.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to addiction.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to child-rearing.

25. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to careers.

26. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to menopause.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to andropause.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to a chronic disease.

29. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to retirement.

30. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to management of finances.

31. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to elder care.

5 32. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to caring for a disabled person.

33. The method of claim 1, wherein said ongoing concern of the client pertains to caring for pets.

10 34. The method of claim 1, wherein, during steps (f-h), both the client and the coach view monitors which display an electronically-stored file that contains a history of the setting and meeting of the client's goals, and wherein the client and coach communicate via Internet chat, conventional telephony, Internet telephony, or video, or a combination thereof, while said file is displayed.

15 35. The method of claim 34, wherein the client has access, between coaching sessions, to said electronically-stored file.

36. The method of claim 34, wherein, during steps (f-h), the coach is visible on the monitor of the client while the coach speaks.

37. The method of claim 34, wherein, during steps (f-h), the client's face is visible on the monitor of the coach while the client speaks.

